

WANDERERS SAVED BY PRICE'S LATE GOAL

NEWCOMER Tony Price saved some red faces at Loakes Park on Saturday. Playing his first game for Wycombe Wanderers, Price scored the equalising goal in the 90th minute to give his side an undeserved share of the Rothmans Isthmian League points.

The one point from the draw means Wycombe drop down to second place in the table, having led for the last couple of weeks. Leytonstone now occupy the top spot with the same number of points but a superior goal average.

In heatwave conditions, Wanderers fielded their two newcomers on Saturday, making three changes from the side that went down to their first defeat of the season at Hitchin on Tuesday. Dave Woodbridge came in for Mick Holifield, Tony Price for Tony Brothers while Ian Rundle replaced Derek Gamblin at full-back. The red-haired Graham Mackenzie was the substitute.

Presumably, manager Brian Lee wanted to give his squad members a try out in a full Isthmian game and understandably the teamwork shown in previous matches just wasn't forthcoming. The overall result was a dull and disappointing performance which left the 1,800 spectators bored and frustrated.

It is difficult to blame the players in such trying conditions — it was hot enough watching, let alone playing football. But nevertheless, had the full side been playing there is little doubt Wanderers would have taken three points.

Passes went astray with monotonous regularity while the defence, once again, struggled against only mediocre opposition. Upfront, the strikers were deprived of good ball from midfield and suffered accordingly.

Tooting, beaten heavily in four away games this term, were well worth a point and few would have denied them three. They fought hard and generally looked more dangerous than their opponents.

They started well with Brian Jones firing over a cross from Alan Ives. In the ninth minute Ives again gave Wycombe cause for concern when his shot was blocked in the six yard box. But in the 12th minute with their first real raid of the game, Wycombe went ahead.

From their second corner of the game, Tony Horseman's flag kick was back-headed from the near post by Woodbridge. Searle hammered in a shot but it was blocked by Kelvin Roots. Dave Bullock however, was on hand to hook home the rebound for his first goal of the season. With this early boost behind them Wanderers looked set to produce their usual attacking football. Unfortunately, it never came.

Instead of their normal attractive game of fast raids accompanied with precision passing, they thumped high balls upfield for Searle and Horseman to chase. But with big Dave Clark in commanding form at the back, Wycombe came up against a solid wall.

Larry Pritchard, back in midfield with Price upfront, seemed to be approaching top form again. He was one of the few who looked happy in the con-

ditions and he almost set up a second goal in the 25th minute. His crossfield pass found Searle, who centred to the far post where Horseman seemed to

Brian Wozley had set up the chance. For the most part, centre-backs Bullock and Wood seemed in control but there were one or two occasions when the

left foot effort just around the post.

Woodbridge came off for another local player, "Jock" Mackenzie, after 49 minutes and

Tooting called on all their reserves of strength. They soon forced three successive corners and from the last, another poor piece of defensive work gave

By STUART EARP; Wycombe W. 2, Tooting & M.2

have a clear header until Kevin Sheehan appeared from nowhere to head the ball away.

A minute later Pritchard went even closer when he blocked Clark's poor clearance, ran on and powered in a drive. Goalkeeper Dave Cobb was off his line but managed to twist round and gather the ball with his fingertips. Ian Rundle also went close when he sent a header just over the crossbar.

Tooting, although hard pressed at this stage, hit back strongly and danger-man Roy Petett had a shot blocked after 36 minutes after former Maidstone man

defence looked distinctly shaky. Wanderers' troubles really started in the second half. Dave Woodbridge, so promising in the pre-season friendlies, seemed totally out of touch. The defence, too, never regained their first half composure.

Rob Williams had a drive well saved by Cobb soon into the new half and then in the 55th minute the diminutive Price showed one dazzling piece of wizardry. Just inside the visitors' penalty area, he brought the ball down, shielded it from a defender and then swivelled and curled a powerful

after Wright had saved well from Petett. Cobb pulled off the save of the match. Horseman rammed in a close range shot that the 'keeper palmed down and gathered superbly.

In the 20th minute, Wycombe were unlucky to find themselves on level terms. Roy Petett tried a pot-shot from the edge of the area which struck a fellow forward, Wright, committed to the original effort, was caught the wrong way and just failed to change course in time, the ball rolling across the line.

As always, the goal proved a real tonic and from then on

them the lead.

Alan Berreclot's corner was met first time by centre-back Clark, who pounded a header into the far corner, completely unchallenged. Wright was left helpless and could justifiably ask what happened to his defence. It was a similar goal to Hitchin's winner in midweek, with the man to man marking from a set piece just not coming off.

Little Mackenzie soon made his presence felt in the later stages and looked a highly promising prospect. He looks and plays like Alan Ball, the England midfielder and his cons-

tant foraging always gave Wycombe a glimmer of hope.

Breaking from midfield he made several telling runs to the wing, but his pin-point crosses were wasted by the front runners.

It seemed all over for Wycombe as the 90th minute arrived, but with only injury time remaining, they managed to pull back to 2-2 with a fine goal. Inevitably, the man who made the score was Pritchard, beating three defenders clustered around him and sending Price racing through into the Tooting penalty box.

Price controlled well, swerved inside, beating full-back Roots and made enough space for a vicious left-foot drive that left Cobb helpless.

The equaliser made for an exciting finish but many of the crowd had departed early and missed the last-minute excitement.

WYCOMBE: D. Wright; I. Rundle, P. Sheehan, D. Clark, W. Smith, D. Burke, R. Petett, A. Berreclot, B. Jones, B. Wozley, A. Ives, sub. R. Green (not used).

TOOTING: D. Cobb, K. Roots, K. Sherriff, D. Clark, G. Mackenzie, L. Pritchard, D. Woodbridge (sub. G. Mackenzie, 59 mins.); A. Horseman, K. Searle, A. Price.

Referee: A. Ward (Southgate).

Half time: 1-0. Goalscorer, Wycombe — Bullock (12), Price (90). Tooting — Petett (65), Clark (76).

Actual paying attendance: 1,556. **Approximate total attendance:** 1,800.